

# Article by LTG Qi Jianguo on International Security Affairs

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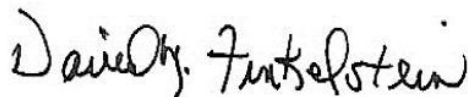
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## Foreword

The CNA China Studies Division is pleased to make available an in-house translation of an article written by Lieutenant General Qi Jianguo of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA).

In December 2012, LTG Qi was appointed Deputy Chief of the General Staff with responsibility for foreign relations and intelligence. A ground forces officer, he spent much of his career in operational assignments in the Nanjing Military Region. At the national level, he has served as Director of the Operations Department of the PLA General Staff Department and as an Assistant to the Chief of the General Staff.

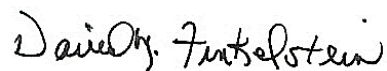
The article that follows was published in the 21 January 2013 issue of *Study Times* (*Xuexi Shibao*), the official weekly newspaper of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Party School. It may represent the first time LTG Qi placed his views on security affairs in the public domain after being elevated to his new post.

Couched as an academic piece of work in a scholarly CCP journal, readers should not assume that the article represents the official views of either the PRC government or the PLA. That said, given General Qi's official portfolio (foreign relations and intelligence) and the venue of publication, it warrants the attention of outside readers interested in how a senior Chinese military official views important regional and global security issues, China's own security situation, and especially the United States.

Of special interest, readers are directed to the sections in which LTG Qi characterizes the objectives, means, and viability of the U.S. policy of "Rebalancing to Asia." Although LTG Qi's analysis may not represent an official PRC position, it is possibly the most detailed public assessment of the rebalancing policy made to date by a senior PRC military official—in this case, the officer responsible for, among other duties, providing strategic assessments to the CCP leadership.

When the next Chinese defense white paper is released, probably in the spring of 2013, readers will be in a better position to determine how much of this article actually previewed the analysis in that official document and how much was strictly LTG Qi's personal opinion.

In the meantime, I am delighted to pass along this article and to acknowledge the contributions and efforts of James Bellacqua, Daniel Hartnett, Brad Daniels, and Tamara Hemphill in making it available to a broad audience.



Dr. David M. Finkelstein  
Vice President, Center for Naval Analyses, &  
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# “An Unprecedented Great Changing Situation: Understanding and Thoughts on the Global Strategic Situation and Our Country’s National Security Environment”<sup>1</sup>

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Qi Jianguo

In today’s world, the international strategic situation is undergoing the most profound changes since World War II. As Chairman Xi has pointed out, “the international system has entered an era of accelerated evolution and profound adjustment,” and “this great changing situation can be said to be unprecedented.” The important strategic thought (*zhongda zhanlue sixiang*; 重大战略思想) of a “great changing situation” (*dabianju*; 大变局) is a scientific judgment (*kexue panduan*; 科学判断) on the world’s strategic situation, it is an overall determination of our country’s security environment, and is the strategic concept (*zhanlue gouxiang*; 战略构想) of accelerating the promotion of the process of multi-polarity. The great changing situation calls for great transformations (*dabiange*, 大变革) and great adjustments (*datiaozheng*; 大调整) to promote great developments. At present, the profound changes to the global strategic situation have entered an era of accelerated development. This is primarily embodied in five respects:

## **1) The balance of power among great powers (*daguo lilian duibi*; 大国力量对比) is undergoing great changes, and the process of multi-polarity is accelerating**

The rise and decline of international great powers is a historical norm. The modern industrial revolution gave birth to the rise of European powers, the pattern of bipolar confrontation took shape after World War II, and the end of the Cold War opened up a new process of global multi-polarity. Over the past 20 years, the balance of global strategic power has undergone great changes and the era where one or two great powers ruled the world should be over and will never return. This is an irreversible historical trend.

At present, the balance of international power is more balanced. The position of U.S. and western forces is on the decline. The United States is bogged down in “two wars and one crisis,” Europe is being dragged down by the debt crisis, and Japan’s political situation has seen “seven Prime Ministers in seven years,” and its economy is in the doldrums. U.S. and Western hard and soft power have both been damaged and this has decreased their ability to manipulate international affairs. The overall strength of

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<sup>1</sup> Qi Jianguo, “Unprecedented Great Changing Situation: Understanding and Thoughts on the Global Strategic Situations and Our Country’s National Security Environment,” *Study Times (Xuexi Shibao)*, 21 January 2013, [http://www.qstheory.cn/zywz/201301/t20130121\\_207019.htm](http://www.qstheory.cn/zywz/201301/t20130121_207019.htm).

emerging powers is getting stronger. Russia's big power revival is accelerating, while the economies of India, Brazil, and others are developing quickly. Emerging powers are increasing their contributions to the global economy and their overall influence is increasing.

In the near future, the focus of world development will continue to shift from west to east and the competition between world forces will take on a pattern of "northern decline, southern rise" (*beijiang, nansheng*; 北降南升). In the next decade or two, it is possible that the initial framework of a multipolar world will take shape. However, a power's rise and decline is a complex and lengthy process and it will be a long process of development before a global multipolar framework emerges.

## **2) Great power relations are undergoing great changes, and the global strategic game is getting stronger**

Great power relations have always been the mainline (*zhuxian*; 主线) of international politics and are crucial to influencing the development of the world strategic situation. For thousands of years, great power confrontation has brought war, destruction and poverty. The end of the Cold War marked the first time in the 500 year rise of the West that a transformation of the international framework was completed without conflict. Twenty years later, mutual cooperation and competition between great powers exists and overlapping interests are interwoven with the strategic game (*zhanlue boyi*; 战略博弈); the risk of all-out confrontation has declined, and great power relations have entered a new phase of development.

Great power interests are deeply blended. National interest is the fundamental starting point in the formulation of a strategy. At present, with the deepening development of economic globalization, the interests of each country are blending together as are crises. A problem in any one country may affect other nations. When thinking of our own development, we must allow others to develop; when thinking of our security, we must think of the security of others; when thinking of how to live our own lives, we must think of the lives of others.

Contradictions among great powers still exist. The increase in common interests has not eradicated the contradictions among great powers. The demands of existing great powers (*shoucheng daguo*; 守成大国) and emerging powers on reforming the international order and global economic governance are different. U.S. scholars have put forth the construct of the "Great West" balancing the "New East." The contradiction

of “homogenous competition” (*tongzhi jingzheng*; 同质竞争) still exists among emerging powers.

Great power strategic games are increasingly complex. Overlapping interests call for cooperation while converging interests incites competition. Each great power draws on each other for vigilance and that is the basic trend in great power relations for now and for some time to come. One should take a long-term perspective in viewing the development of relations between great powers, in particular, there must be strategic foresight (*zhanlue yuanjian*; 战略远见) for the development of Sino-U.S. relations. If we only stare at the issues at the forefront over the next three to five years, points of disagreement will exceed the points we have in common; if we focus on the next one or two decades, the points we have in common may exceed our points of disagreement; if our eyes can see a little further, we may find even more things in common.

### **3) Great power strategies are undergoing great adjustments, and the trend of each country’s strategy is becoming clear**

Strategy determines the path of national development and strategic gains and losses determine the rise and fall of great powers. After the end of the Cold War, each great power actively carried out a series of strategic adjustments (*zhanlue tiaozheng*; 战略调整) based on the ebb and flow of international balance of power and changes to its security threats.

U.S. strategic adjustments are gradually maturing. After the end of the Cold War, the United States carried out three rounds of major strategic adjustments. The first was the “participation and expansion strategy” put forth by the Clinton Administration, the strategic focus remained on Europe and actively promoting NATO’s eastward expansion and strengthening the trans-Atlantic alliance. The second was after 9/11 when the Bush Administration launched the “global war on terror,” the strategic focus shifted to the Middle East and Central Asia, and the United States launched the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars. The third was the “rebalance” to the Asia-Pacific which started in the late stages of the Bush Administration and accelerated once the Obama Administration assumed power, with the strategic focus shifting eastward to the Asia-Pacific. At present, this strategic adjustment has become rather systemic, has been comprehensively put into practice, and is mainly manifested in the “five clarifications” (*wuge mingque*; 五个明确): clarification of the strategic name, with U.S. officials recently using the “rebalance” to summarize this strategic adjustment; clarification of the strategic objective (*zhanlue mubiao*; 战略目标), whereby it clarifies that the focus has shifted from dealing with counterterrorism to the challenge of emerging powers in an

effort to sustain the U.S. “leading position”; clarification of the road map, whereby it proposes the six initiatives of strengthening alliances, developing partnerships, strengthening multilateral mechanisms, closer economic and trade relations, strengthening military presence, and promoting democracy, which all reflect the basic context of the U.S. strategic “rebalancing”; clarification of the key areas of focus (*zhongdian guanzhu diqu*; 重点关注地区), whereby it proposes that one of most important tasks of U.S. national strategy in the next 10 years is to administer the Asia-Pacific in order to create a U.S. “Pacific century”; and clarification of the concept of a “greater Asia-Pacific” (*da yatai*; 大亚太), whereby it incorporates the Indian Ocean and South Asian region into the scope of the U.S. rebalance to the Asia-Pacific.

Russia’s strategic adjustment has basically been accomplished (*jiben daowei*; 基本到位). In the initial period after the Cold War, Russia paid a heavy price for the strategic direction it chose. After Putin took power, Russia transformed from chaos to order and used this order to bring about its own revitalization. In 2012, Putin once again became president and the Russian regime is expected to remain stable for a long period of time, with the direction of national strategy basically determined. Russia will accelerate the promotion of its strong power strategy, promote the process of CIS integration with a Eurasian alliance (*Ouya Lianmeng*; 欧亚联盟) as the core, and improve Russia’s comprehensive national power to realize a great power resurgence.

Japan’s strategic adjustment is trending in the direction of the right. In 1947, Japan put forth the strategy of becoming an “economic power” and in the early 1980s put forth the strategy of becoming a “political power.” In recent years, the Japanese government put forth the idea of becoming a so-called “normal country,” the essence of which was to break through the relevant limitations imposed by the international community after losing World War II. Recently, the Liberal Democratic Party has regained its hold on political power and Abe has returned to power and the direction of Japan’s foreign strategic adjustment should be observed closely.

The European countries of England, France, and Germany, as well as the Asia-Pacific countries of Australia and India have also actively carried out their own adjustments to their foreign and security strategies.

#### **4) The focus of great power competition is undergoing great adjustments, the depth of geostrategic competition is expanding**

In the Cold War, the focus of strategic competition (*zhanlue zhengduo jiaodian*; 战略争夺焦点) was Europe. After the Cold War, the Middle East became the focus of strategic

competition. At present, the focus of global competition has shifted to the Asia-Pacific. The United States has proposed an eastward shift in its strategic focus, Japan is actively accompanying the U.S. “rebalance to the Asia-Pacific,” Russia has advanced the idea of “Eurasian integration,” India is promoting its “look East” policy, and Australia is seeking a deeper level of “integration into the Asia-Pacific.”

The U.S. eastward shift in its strategic focus still faces multiple constraints: First, the contradiction between its objectives being too big and its abilities insufficient. U.S. power is on the decline and leading the Asia-Pacific is beyond its grasp. Second, the contradiction between “advancing east” and “minding the west.” The international counterterrorism situation is grim and the continued turmoil in West Asia and North Africa makes it difficult to shift east. Third, the contradiction between Asia-Pacific countries’ dependence on the United States and their vigilance against it. Each country not only hopes to “rely on the United States to make themselves strong,” but also worries about the U.S. interfering in their internal politics. Within the United States recently there has also been a counter-argument that the U.S. “rebalance” to the Asia-Pacific has given too much prominence to military containment, and a fear that things could backfire; they have put forth the idea that while the U.S. “pivots to the Asia-Pacific,” it must not neglect Europe or the Middle East.

In terms of global geostrategy, Europe retains crucial significance for the United States, the direction of the Middle East situation suggests it will not develop according to the “Greater Middle East” road map, while the situations in Central and South Asia have additional variables. In the future, the focus of great power competition will shift to the Asia-Pacific, but the Greater Middle East and Greater Central Asia will also remain key areas for each contestant.

## **5) Great power deployments are undergoing great changes, global military competition is intensifying**

Trends in security strategy are at the forefront while adjustments to strategic deployments (*zhanlue bushu tiaozheng*; 战略部署调整) are the starting point. With the strategic adjustment of the major powers approaching maturity, the military deployments of big powers, especially the United States, are accelerating. In recent years, the United States has gradually adjusted its troop deployments from Europe and the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific, forming a strategic system with military alliances as strategic support, with the strategic objective of controlling the Pacific and the Atlantic, with the strategic fulcrums of north-south anchors, and with the mutual support of the three islands chains. First, is to adjust the layout of its forces, shifting the focus from Northeast Asia to Southeast Asia; second is expanding its strategic depth (*zhanlue zongshen*; 战略纵深),

shifting forces from the first to the second and third island chains, forming a deployment pattern of great depth; third is to give prominence to key deployments, accelerating the construction of an integrated strategic early warning system, battlefield surveillance system, joint operational command system, allied (*lianmeng*; 联盟) combat force system, and an Asia-Pacific missile defense system; fourth, attaching importance to mobile deployments, using exercises, training and rotational deployments to ensure that U.S. military combat forces are familiar with and able to adapt to the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean battlefield environments; fifth is to strengthen forward presence, further deepening military alliances with Japan and the Philippines, and expanding strategic partnerships with relevant regional nations.

Other big powers are actively promoting adjustments to military deployments. Russia is solidifying its military deployments and military influence in the CIS, especially in Central Asian states, and is strengthening its military deployments in the Far East and the Pacific. Japan's defensive priorities have shifted from the north to the southwest, focusing on strengthening military deployments to the southwest islands. India is actively expanding its military influence linking the Indian Ocean with the Western Pacific.

Observing the present global strategic situation, in my opinion both opportunities and challenges still exist, and the opportunities are greater than the challenges. At present, our country's external security environment is stable overall and this can be summarized into the "four no changes" (*sige meiyou gaibian*; 四个没有改变): The keynote of the times has not changed (*shidai zhuti meiyou gaibian*; 时代主题没有改变), it remains peace and development; the international environment of our economic development has not changed, the balance of international forces continues to transform in a direction that is conducive to maintaining world peace; the overall controllable state of our peripheral security environment has not changed; and our advantageous position (*youli diwei*; 有利地位) in the strategic interaction with other great powers has not changed. At the same time, we are facing serious risks and challenges (*yansu de fengxian tiaozhan*; 严峻的风险挑战), primarily we should be alert to and guard against the "problems in five aspects" (*wuge fangmian wenti*; 五个方面问题). First, is to be alert to and guard against the Western strategy of penetration and subversion. Western countries attempt to use multiple channels, including military deployments, political transformation, economic control, and cultural penetration, to bring the relevant regional countries into a global system for [the West's] benefit. The West's use of military "hard strikes" against medium and small countries are only able to achieve "control of time and space" in the short-term, but are difficult to achieve a true victory; yet its means of "soft penetration" as a strategy of subversion can bring about "psychological control." This is a greater, more long-term danger. Second is to be alert

to and guard against Japanese political rightism (*youqinghua*; 右倾化) taking the leading position. Presently, the trend of the whole of Japanese politics moving to the right is rather clear, its military strategy is changing from "purely self-defense" to a more externally-oriented and offensive type; if any of these developments continue, they will not only have a major effect on the security situation of East Asia, but also on the entire Asia-Pacific Region. Third is to be alert to and guard against foreign great powers getting involved in the South China Sea issue. The South China Sea issue becoming more heated is closely related to foreign great powers getting involved. We need to make (*yao rang*; 要让) the relevant countries understand that we have the strategic resolve to use the necessary means to defend [our] sovereignty, that we have the firm will to defend national interests from being violated, and cause them to abandon the idea of taking chances and [instead] make wise choices. Fourth is to be alert to and guard against the spread of "New Interventionism" (*xinganshe zhuyi*; 新干涉主义). The essence of "New Interventionism" is to deny the basic principle of modern international relations firmly established in the 1648 "Treaty of Westphalia," especially the principles of sovereignty and equality. Small and weak countries depend upon the issue of sovereignty as the last line of defense for their existence. If a nation loses its sovereignty, how can it guarantee it will have human rights? The issue of equality is that small and weak nations depend upon it as the last protective screen to safeguard their dignity (*weihu zunyan*; 维护尊严). If a nation loses its dignity, how can it speak of freedom? The essence of "New Interventionism" is a type of neocolonialism that waves the banner of "human rights" (*dazhe "renquan" qihao*; 打着“人权”旗号). If any of this develops, international security will face serious challenges. Fifth is to be alert to and guard against the rise of non-traditional security factors. Cybersecurity (*wangluo anquan*; 网络安全) concerns national sovereignty as well as the security of economic and social operations, and it concerns the quality of human existence. The West's so-called "internet freedom" actually is a type of cyber-hegemony (*wangluo ziyou*; 网络自由). In the information era, seizing and maintaining superiority in cyberspace is more important (*gengwei zhongyao*; 更为重要) than seizing command of the sea and command of the air were in World War II. Modern terrorism is a "blend" (*kenhuti*; 混合体) created by power politics, religious extremism, and ethnic separatism. Creating "double standards" in dealing with the problem of terrorism only results in more terrorism (*yuefan yuekong*; 越反越恐). Counterterrorism must insist on treating both the root cause and the symptom of the disease, it must rely on international cooperation, and it must rely on combining force with non-violent means; relying only on military means is unable to eliminate the grounds that breed modern terrorism. The issue of energy security is closely tied to the regional security situation, international regulations and rules, the security of strategic channels, and the progress of science and technology. To safeguard energy security, we must first rely upon actual strength; second, rely on

science and technology; and third, rely on participating in the formulation and protection of international rules. At the same time, the deepening influence of the international financial crisis and ecological security issues brought about by economic and social development are also worth paying attention to.

The times are changing, and [our] strategy needs to look forward. Facing the accelerating development and transformation of the global strategic situation, and facing an international security environment that is becoming more complicated by the day, we should continue to deepen our strategic considerations, strengthen our strategic planning, grasp the strategic initiative, and realize the strategic objectives put forth by the 18<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in a timely fashion.



